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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN 000057

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DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/MTS AND EAP/C
SINGAPORE FOR DAO
DEFENSE FOR OSD/POLICY

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SUBJECT: MORE ON CHINA DEFENSE MINISTER VISIT TO BRUNEI

REF: BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN 35

Classified By: DCM Justin Friedman, reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (C) In follow up conversations subsequent to reftel, the Chinese Ambassador to Brunei told the Ambassador that the visit of Defense Minister General Cao Guanchuan had been very successful from the Chinese point of view. In addition to activities reported reftel, General Cao had also offered to expand training opportunities in China for Bruneians and invited the Bruneian military to send observers to future Chinese military exercises. Brunei Defense Chief of Staff Pehin General Halbi Yussof confirmed to us that Cao had made the invitation to observe land forces exercises some time in the next twelve months, but did not specify whether or when Brunei might take advantage of this offer.

¶2. (C) Chinese Defense Attaché Sr. Colonel Zhan Yan told us that China was also interested in conducting naval exercises with Brunei, indicating that this had also been raised by General Cao. Lee said that initial thinking was along the lines of a disaster response or safety at sea exercise. He added that the Chinese Navy hoped to conduct its first-ever port visit to Brunei soon, although he did not state how far planning had progressed on either the port visit or the proposed exercise.

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